

“Print & Go” T-Shirts

Great for groups!

Printing creative T-shirts and fabrics doesn't always require stencils and screens — students can easily design their own giant stamps and paint them any way they want. Even if each shirt displays the same message, each will be a completely unique work of art!

This process is perfect for group settings — schools, camps, daycare centers, clubs, family reunions and special events — but it is also ideal for countless home decorating and craft projects.

Grade Levels K-8

Note: instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. For best results, pre-wash and iron T-shirts. Surface-wash canvas bags and iron them if necessary. Place scrap cardboard or a T-shirt board inside the shirt or bag to keep the ink from bleeding through the fabric to the opposite side.
2. Cut printing blocks to the desired size. 4" x 6" is suitable for a small child's shirt; adult sizes may require a block up to 9" wide. Soft-Kut® Printing Blocks may be cut to any size using scissors, a craft knife or a paper trimmer. Both sides of the block can be used.
3. Cut tracing paper to the same size as the printing blocks.

Process

1. Use a soft graphite pencil to design the artwork, message or logo on the tracing paper. For best results, leave plenty of "blank" areas (also known as "negative space") for applying paint.
2. Turn the artwork over and place the design on the block, hinging it on one side with masking tape. This will keep the design from slipping and allow you to check the transfer. Trace from the back side so that it appears reversed. Use sufficient pressure to transfer the graphite design to the block, but not so much that the paper tears.
3. Carve the design carefully with Lino Cutter. The carved-away area will appear white in the print.



Materials

[Soft-Kut® Printing Blocks](#), 6" x 12" (40401-1002); share one among three students

[Speedball® Linoleum Cutter Handle](#) (40201-0000) and [No. 3 Large-Line Cutters](#), package of 12 (40203-1312); need one handle and one cutter per student

[Blick® Tracing Paper](#), 9" x 12", 50-sheet pad (10609-2013); share one across class

[Blick® Studio Drawing Pencils](#), 4B (22220-2041); one per student

[Masking Tape](#), 1/2" (24126-1012); share one roll across class

[Jacquard® Textile Colors](#), assorted colors, 2.25-oz jars (01208-); share five or six across class

[Blick® Economy Camel Round Brushes](#), set of 120 (06220-1120); need one brush per student

[T-Shirts](#), appropriate sizes (44959-), or [Small Canvas Tote](#) (08931-1010); one per student

Optional Materials:

[T-Shirt Board](#) (44943-1020)

Wash the extra graphite lines away with soap and water. Center the printing plate on the T-shirt or bag and make light dots with

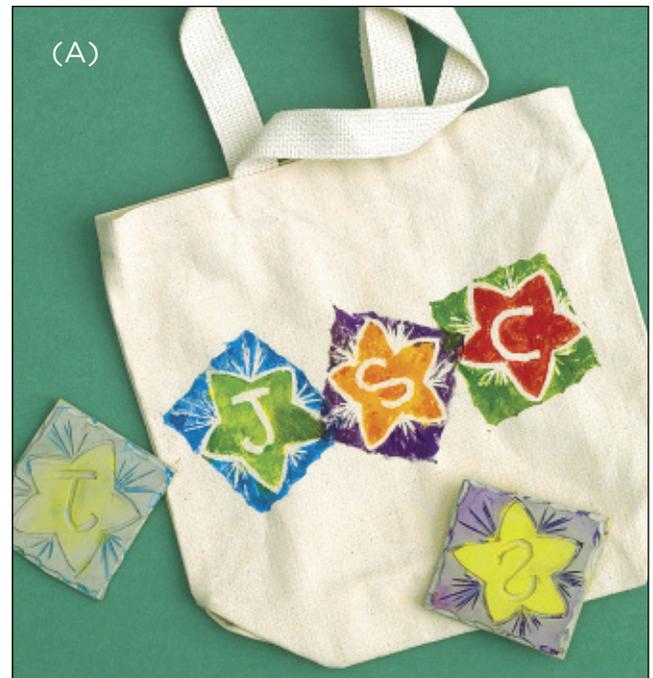
Process, continued

pencil in the corners to mark where to make the print.

4. Dampen the block's surface with a damp paper towel. Brush fabric paint over the entire printing block, right up to the edge of the design. If paint gets into the carved-out areas, leave it there, as it most likely will not print. Paint designs and patterns in multiple colors, mixing, swirling and overlapping as you go. Apply paint generously and work quickly before the paint dries.
5. Turn the plate over, place it in the center of the T-shirt or bag, and apply firm pressure over the back of the plate with your hands. Lift the plate and examine the print. More fabric paint can be brushed on if an area printed too lightly or if more detail is desired. Allow to dry.
6. To make the colors permanent, iron the reverse side of the fabric with the appropriate heat setting for the fabric. T-shirts may also be placed in a hot dryer for 40 minutes to set.

Process for Large Groups

1. To make T-shirts or bags for large groups, make multiple printing plates of the same design (steps 1 through 3).
2. Set up "printing stations" with a pre-carved Soft-Kut plate, paint, brushes and water. At each station, students take turns painting the plate and stamping it onto the fabric. Fabric paint will be dry to the touch in 15-20 minutes.
3. Clean the plate between prints with soap and water or a wet wipe.



Options

- Cut the Soft-Kut material into smaller pieces to make initials and print one at a time, see example (A).
- To print on dark or colored shirts, make a white underbase first with a solid print of [Jacquard® Textile Opaque White](#) (01208-1075). Allow the paint to dry, then print colors on top of the White base.
- For printing metallic or pearlescent colors, use [Jacquard® Lumiere Colors](#) (02953-). These opaque colors can be used to print directly onto dark or colored fabrics.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

K-4 Students know the differences between materials, techniques and processes.

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

Content Standard #3 Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.

K-4 Students select and use subject matter, symbols and ideas to communicate meaning.

5-8 Students use subjects, themes and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artwork.